

THE WICKED HUSBANDMAN.

[An essay read at Ashland Sunday-school April 14, by S. B. Grisso.]

This parable treats on the privileges which God had bestowed upon the Jewish nation, their abuse, and perversion of the many blessings conferred upon them.

This parable so plainly illustrated to the mind of the Jews their condition, their past life and thus teaching them how they are convicting and passing sentence on themselves, and presenting the enormity of their wickedness plainly before them.

They are likened to the possessor of a vineyard planted with its glowing vines, hedged around for protection, furnished with all the necessary elements needed for a fruitful gathering. They had a dispensation of light and of mercy. They had ordinances of divine service, a priesthood, the oracles of God, and much more, the divine presence, care, blessings, and protection of God. They had no lack for their national prosperity, ecclesiastical purity, or spiritual happiness. But they lacked one thing, to render to God the things that are God's. They refused to yield the portion of the fruit to its owner. Nothing unreasonable was asked, no impossibilities were demanded yet he was refused. They had forgotten the source of all their blessings, they had forgotten that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

But let us notice the import of this parable. The Jews were especially chosen. They received special favor with God. They had all that heart and soul could ask for yet, they were not satisfied. Persecution and wounds were inflicted on the servants of God. Consider the love, the boundless love for his people, not satisfied to give them up at the first call, though his servant was caught and shamefully entreated, yet God in his infinite love sends another prophet, only to witness the same treatment. Thus prophet after prophet fell a victim to the hard hearted Jew. Servant after servant was sent to turn his chosen back to him, but all was in vain. They had hardened their hearts until the wrath of God was come upon them to the upper most. Once more his love constrains him to make a greater a nobler sacrifice for his people. He sends his son, his only son, his beloved, greater than all the other prophets. Surely they will reverence this my son. If they do I will be to them a father and they shall be to me a people. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world was sent to redeem them from their fallen estate. He was sent to give life, and that more abundantly. Infinite wisdom only asked for its own. But no, they had shut their ears against his call-

ing; they had hardened their hearts against all warning; they had rejected the councils of God. The stone which the builders had rejected, they also cast out. Yea, they had cast out his servants as evil doers. They had digged down his altars and thus relinquished their claims to the vineyard.

But are there not some lessons in this subject from which we may learn our duty toward our Creator? We also are placed in a vineyard filled with religious privileges, filled with all opportunities for doing good, filled with Bibles with their pages of precious promises of divine truth. Being thus surrounded with opportunities how much fruit we should yield to his servants. You may not openly beat and scourge the servant of God, but are you rendering to him his portion of the fruit? God makes no unreasonable demands of us. He demands no impossibilities but only his own. When he comes to you pleading in Jesus' name that you render him your service, your life, when he pleads for you to lay down your sins at the feet of Jesus and receive pardon, peace and joy, are you sending him away empty handed, and hurling in his face the threats of persecution, disregarding his mission and purpose? Yea, they are waiting for your soul. It is ours to till the soil, to sow the seed and thus return to our master his portion. It is his to command and ours to obey. Obedience to his word is the required fruit. Disobedience and neglect is the road to ruin. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, whether to the flesh or to the spirit, for he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

The Father sent his Son to be your Saviour. He came into the world as the meek and lowly Redeemer; he is bidding you to come; he offers you the terms of pardon for your sins. He has purchased you with his blood. Therefore, "Ye are not your own, ye have been bought with a price." One more messenger will be sent, one more call will be made, and we must answer. No sending him away empty handed, no evading the answer. Silently and peacefully will he enter, gently will he enwrap you in his arms, calmly and silently bear you away, prepared or unprepared, fruit or no fruit, as a gatherer or a scatterer, either to be forever with Jesus in his kingdom or to be forever banished from his presence and his glory. What more shall we say but render to him your faith, your life, your service patiently waiting for his return when he shall gather together his children, and shall be forever and forever with them.

Home Circle.

THOSE HOME BURDENS.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him."—Prov. 3, 6.

"Perhaps to thee thy burden seems
A heavy load;
Perhaps no sunshine ever gleams
Upon thy road;
Perhaps—perhaps thou chocest, when
Thy choice was made,
The path that ever since has been
Within the shade.
O soul, let not thy light be dim:
'In all thy ways acknowledge Him.'

"Come, cast thy burden on the Lord—
He cares for thee;
Thy path He'll brighten thro' his word,
Till thou canst see.
A creature He hath made of you—
Let Him direct,
And thou wilt find thy pathway true
In each respect.
O soul, to Him all praises be,
For Christ, the Lord, hath died for thee.

"When social life or business care
Thy mind would fill,
Just take it to the Lord in prayer,
And ask His will.
Then, though the world may laugh and say:
'Thy sight is dim,'
Take courage, and from day to day
Acknowledge him.
O soul, let angels now record:
'I'm not ashamed to own my Lord.'"

MY LADY'S BOWER.

"Which will look best in the fireplace, mamma, this jar of golden-rod or the brass andirons and fixtures?"

"If the cold wave comes, Ellen, dear, a spanking little fire will look better than either."

"Oh! dear, no!" cried the girl, positively; "the Reverends must blow their fingers, they must indeed; I can't have ashes and hot coals and things on my pretty tiles."

"Don't pick an *old* preacher for your guest, then, daughter, or I shall certainly give him a fire."

The town of Inframont was getting ready for the meeting of Synod; and as Inframont was rather a small place to entertain four hundred preachers and elders the committee felt nervous about it.

"Can't you take one more?" was the anxious question from the committee, which had suggested to Mrs. Reid that Ellen might sleep in her Aunt Kate's dressing-room, and put another guest in "my lady's bower," as the pretty blue-and-gold room was called.

Ellen readily agreed to give up her room, but stipulated, that she should choose her guest.

"You see, Mr. Clayton," she said to the mused chairman, "papa and mamma always take 'leavings' at church meetings, and consequently we get old elders from